

Income Maintenance News

A Division of Health Care Financing, Department of Health and Family Services, Bureau of Health Care Eligibility/Bureau of Income Maintenance Administration Publication

New-Look Online Handbooks

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The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services is redesigning its online handbooks for Income Maintenance (IM) programs so they have the same look and feel. The Department is using a new web tool that should greatly improve the Medicaid and Food Stamp handbooks, and allow for the Income Maintenance Manual to be put on the Internet.

The Medicaid Eligibility Handbook will be converted to the new format this spring. This will replace the Adobe Acrobat PDF version of the Medicaid Eligibility Handbook.

Late in the summer, the Food Stamp Handbook will then be converted. The Food Stamp Handbook and Medicaid Handbook will look and act alike, so once you learn your way around one, you'll know how to use other related handbooks. The Income Maintenance Manual will be placed online using the same handbook format by the end of the year.

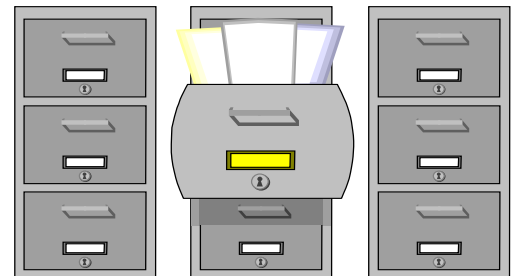
The new online handbooks will resemble current Food Stamp Handbook features with:

- A directory of chapters and sub-chapters in the left pane with direct page links,
- Text in the right pane,
- Search engine capacity,
- Access to prior handbook versions,
- Access to PDF versions of the handbooks,
- Back and forward navigation buttons,

- Print capacity for one page, several pages, or the whole handbook, and
- Linking between related sections.

New features for the revised handbooks include:

- Capacity for CARES screen shots in the handbooks,
- Ability to add sociograms, icons, and other graphics to illustrate points,



- Capacity for natural language searches using questions like "What is the income limit for 4?" which would direct users to the income limits section,
- Handbook writers can monitor which pages are accessed most and send this information on to trainers,
- Handbook writers have more flexibility to use different colors, fonts, and highlight tools to make text stand out.

Look for an operations memo this spring describing the rollout of the new online handbooks tool. It's intuitive, easy-to-learn, and should help make your job easier.

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Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program

Stacia Jankowski, Policy Analyst

The Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program is an information-sharing initiative that allows states to verify the alien status of non-citizens applying for benefits at the local agency. Through this process, local agencies ensure that only eligible non-citizens receive benefits.

The way local agency workers access the SAVE Program is changing. Currently, a client's alien

status is verified through the SAVE program by phone, using one access code per county. This Spring, states are required to begin using a new web-based version of the SAVE system. The Department of Health and Family Services has implemented this new system. See Operations Memo 04-10 and the supplemental training material for more information.

An Introduction to the CARES Information and Problem Resolution Center

Laurie Teubert, CARES Information and Problem Resolution

The CARES Information and Problem Resolution Center (CARES Call Center) is part of the Communications Section in the Bureau of Health Care Eligibility, Division of Health Care Financing (DHCF). It is the primary point of contact for local agency personnel to resolve policy questions/issues regarding Wisconsin Works (W-2), Food Stamps, Medicaid, Child Care, Food Stamp Employment & Training



(FSET), Emergency Assistance, Burial Reimbursement, and Refugee Services. Call Center staff also resolve questions/issues on systems including CARES and the CARES Automated Tracking System (CATS), MMIS, CEFS, Emergency Assistance Tracking System, Barrier Screening Tool and the Automated Case Directory.

The Call Center staff is comprised of five full-time employees: Linda Auchue, Bert Bluma, Phoua Her, Michelle Pauser and Laurie Teubert. Contact them via e-mail (carpolcc@dhfs.state.wi.us), telephone (608-261-6378), or fax (608-267-2269) from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Call Center is closed Thursday, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Friday, 8:30 to 10:00 a.m., for staff meetings. Please leave a message when the Call Center is closed.

CARES/Policy Coordinators

Whenever possible, CARES/policy questions should come from the agency's designated CARES or Policy Coordinators. Workers are asked to utilize these local resources because:

1. They are the central points of contact for the CARES Call Center,
2. The coordinators can reduce problem resolution time by trouble-shooting and pinpointing the appropriate CARES issue before calling, and
3. These coordinators can ensure that information received from the CARES Call Center is shared with all agency staff.

Agencies that have appointed coordinators with extensive program/CARES experience have found that questions brought to coordinators can often be answered locally. If the question cannot be resolved locally, designated Pol-

(Continued on page 3)

The CARES Information and Problem Resolution Center, otherwise known as the Call Center, is the primary point of contact for local agency personnel to resolve policy questions/issues regarding:

- Wisconsin Works (W-2),
- Food Stamps, Medicaid,
- Child Care,
- Food Stamp Employment & Training (FSET),
- Emergency Assistance, Burial Reimbursement, and
- Refugee Services.

An Introduction to the CARES Information and Problem Resolution Center

(Continued from page 2)

icy or CARES Coordinators should then contact the Call Center. A list of the CARES Coordinators and Policy Coordinators can be found on the Eligibility Management Home Page (<http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/em/index.htm>) in the Directory of IM Agencies.

Policy Coordinators

The Policy Coordinator's role is to determine if the requested information is already available from previous Call Center contacts, manuals, handbooks, Operations Memos, or training materials before contacting the Call Center with policy questions or issues.

CARES Coordinators

The CARES Coordinator's role is to contact the Call Center for systems issues not related to hardware or connectivity problems. The CARES Coordinator will ensure the problem is systems related, not a data entry error, and has not already been reported to the Call Center. When contacting the CARES Call Center, the CARES Coordinator should have all of the pertinent information with update access to the case, so s/he can implement corrective measures.

Workers should call the Call Center directly if s/he is unable to get past a CARES screen and needs assistance to move forward in the driverflow.

In situations where CARES Call Center staff determine that it would be more efficient to talk to the worker directly, the worker will be contacted.

Other Help Desk Resources

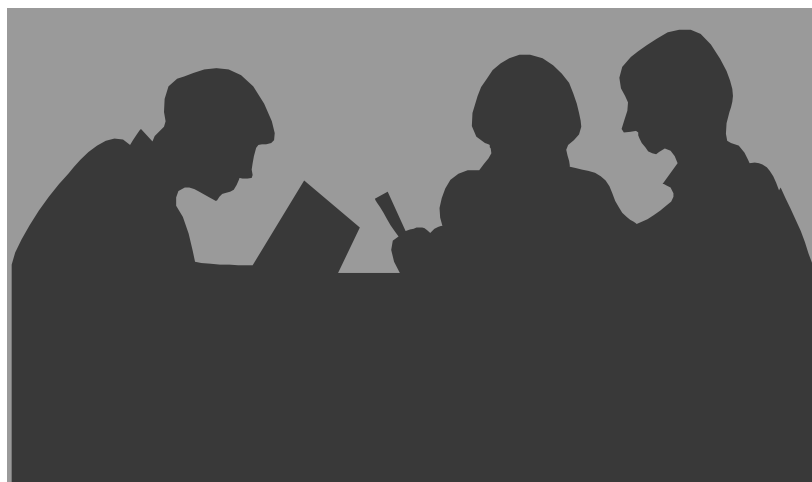
Security Problems

Report security problems by contacting the Security Help Desk at 608-268-6827 (see Help Desk Directory attached).

Connectivity Problems

Report CARES clocking, connectivity and printing issues to the DWD Service Desk directly at 608-266-7252

The Call Center staff also resolves questions/issues on systems including CARES and the CARES Automated Tracking System (CATS), MMIS, CEFS, Emergency Assistance Tracking System, Barrier Screening Tool and the Automated Case Directory.



The CARES Web User Interface Project: An Overview

Jeff Esterholm, Trainer

Introduction

The CARES Web User Interface project is the transformation of CARES mainframe screens to a web-based application. Project I includes Client Registration (CR) and Application Entry (AE). Over time, parts of the system will be moved to the Web.

The Webification of CARES

The Web-based user interface is scheduled to be implemented on November 29, 2004. The Web Initiatives Workgroup has included policy analysts from Medicaid, Food Stamps, Wisconsin Works (W-2), Child Care, and representatives from the BHCE Systems, Communications and Training sections, and Deloitte Consulting.

Project Objectives

Project objectives include:

- County workload reduction,
- Error rate reduction and increased payment accuracy,



- Administrative costs reduction,
- Increased worker satisfaction, and
- Improved customer service.

Enhancements to Existing System

The enhancements include:

- Intelligent driver flows,

- Navigation ease,
- Reduced need for worker memorization of codes, parameters and transactions, and
- Access to online systems, process and policy help.

Where We Have Been: Where We Are Going

The Web Initiatives Workgroup completed data analysis of CR and AE screens in September 2003. Programs using CARES data element in these subsystems were analyzed in order to identify which elements may no longer be needed. October 2003 Workgroup discussions delved into: intelligent driver flows, addressing initial intakes, person adds, new program requests, reviews and changes, and the preliminary Web page breakdown.

Discussion at weekly meetings currently focuses on the overall design of the web application, documentation templates, and steps for moving forward.

The tentative timeline for Project I is as follows:

- Development, 1/26/04 – 7/23/04
- System Testing, 7/26/04 – 9/10/04
- User Acceptance Testing, 9/13/04 – 10/29/04
- Training, 11/1/04 – 11/19/04
- Production Readiness, 11/15/04 – 11/26/04
- Go Live, 11/29/04.

We are currently planning for the implementation of Project I and are considering whether we should pilot the new web version for a period of time before rolling out the changes statewide.

The CARES Web User Interface project is a transformation of CARES to a web-based application, and the beginning of the entire webification of the CARES system.

Transitional Food Stamps (TFS)

Staci Wanty, Trainer

The Department of Health and Family Services has implemented the Transitional Food Stamp (TFS) policy to ease the transition and provide a safety net for families on FS who stop receiving W-2 or Tribal TANF cash payments. This policy allows the FS Group to receive five months of frozen FS benefits.

TFS policy and procedure was announced in Operations Memo 04-07, released February

20, 2004 with a CARES implementation date of February 27, 2004. There are two TFS courses offered through the Partner Training Services (PTS) Learning Center — a course for IM workers and a course for Financial and Employment Planners (FEPs). Each course consists of an online quiz, a training supplement guide, and an evaluation. The IM course also includes a companion PowerPoint Demonstration.

“The Department of Health and Family Services has created the Transitional Food Stamp (TFS) policy to ease the transition and provide a safety net for families on FS who stop receiving W-2 or Tribal TANF cash payments.”

BadgerCare Changes

Michelle Pauser, CARES Information and Problem Resolution

In January, BadgerCare premiums were increased. Additional changes to the BadgerCare program are just around the corner. While verification requirements for other forms of Medicaid remain the same, we will need to verify employment and insurance access/coverage for BadgerCare eligibility determinations, beginning this Spring.

To facilitate this new process of verification, DHFS is developing scannable employer verification of earnings and health insurance forms.

The forms will be generated by CARES, sent to the applicant/recipient, completed by employers, returned by the applicant/recipient or the employer, and scanned centrally. The information on these forms will then be sent to an inbox and auto populated on appropriate screens. Workers will be able to access the inbox. Workers will also be able to view an image of the scanned document on the web in an “electronic file”. Watch for an upcoming Operations Memo for more details.

Useful Income Maintenance Websites

Dave Hippler

Income Maintenance Advisory Committee

The Income Maintenance Advisory Committee (IMAC) is a partnership between DHFS and its partner agencies that administer Income Maintenance programs. This site explains the structure of IMAC, details its subcommittees, and provides access to agendas, minutes, and supplemental information.

See <http://www.imac.state.wi.us/>

Eligibility Management

The Eligibility Management (EM) web is an Income Maintenance worker's one stop shopping site for all things IM-related. You'll find links

here to handbooks, forms, publications, CARES sites, ops memos, training, news, and much more. Save this one as a favorite today! See <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/em/index.htm>

Payment Accuracy

The new Food Stamp Payment Accuracy page is available. This payment accuracy website will provide you with information and/or links to current FS error rates, error trends, resources available to assist in payment accuracy, and updates on payment accuracy from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

See <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/em/payment->

TRAINING NEWS UPDATES

Food Stamp Application Processing: A Final Report on Essential Elements of Eligibility Processing

Staci Wanty, Trainer

The Food Stamp Application Processing (FSAP) course was conceived as a distance learning presentation that used existing and familiar training technology to highlight certain areas where errors persist in Food Stamp (FS) cases. Policy changes implemented in 2003 also were reviewed.

The goal of the three-part course offered in the Fall of 2003 was to help workers improve accuracy in FS eligibility determinations. Part I was an online FS Application Processing quiz. Part II consisted of a printable workbook using case scenarios, and CARES screens to illustrate policy examples and application processing procedures. Part III was a hands-on activity that simulated CARES screens and stressed the impact of data entries on FS benefit amounts. This distance learning experience concluded December 12, 2003 and was followed by an online course evaluation.

Course Background

A workgroup involving staff from Policy, Training, Quality Assurance, the CARES Call Center, and a Payment Accuracy Consultant (PAC) participated in course development. The training was not mandatory, but Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) Secretary Helene Nelson strongly encouraged employees to utilize the training opportunity.

Course Participation

More than 1,000 Food Stamp workers statewide completed at least some portion of this course — nearly 90 percent of the estimated 1,128 workers in the state! All county agencies and all but two tribes had at least some workers

participating. One hundred percent of staff took at least some portion of the course in 39 counties and three tribes.

More than half of all workers in the state (640 or 56.7 percent) completed the entire course. Several agencies and one tribe had a 100 percent completion rate. Several larger agencies had 75 percent or more of their workers complete the course.

Evaluation Data Summary

Interesting observations include:

- Only 34 percent of respondents used the online FS handbook while participating.
- 92 percent of the respondents were able to access the Authorware activity with little or no difficulty.
- 80 percent of the respondents indicated they were able to complete the course in the anticipated amount of time (Part I quiz, 45 minutes; Part II workbook, 4.5 hours; and Part III Authorware activity, 45 minutes).

Pro Shop and Coach's Corner

An optional follow-up review to this training is available in the January 2004 issues of the *Pro Shop and Coach's Corner*. This optional quiz is designed for individuals, small groups, and staff meetings, and does not impact credit for the FSAP course. For more information contact Theresa Fosbinder at Fosbitl@dhfs.state.wi.us.

"More than 1,000 Food Stamp workers statewide completed at least some portion of this course — nearly 90 percent of the estimated 1,128 workers in the state!"

Reduced Change Reporting: Phase IIA

Staci Wanty, Trainer

Phase IIA of Reduced Change Reporting for Food Stamps was implemented at the end of February 2004. Training for this change was offered in two parts. The first part, regarding a new policy on 12-month certifications and 6-month interim reporting requirements, is the first statewide distance learning initiative offered through the Partner Training Services (PTS) Learning Center. This enhanced training administration system will be used to access and track training events via the Internet.

The Reduced Change Reporting policy and procedure was announced in Operations Memo 04-07, released February 13, 2004. The CARES implementation date was February 27, 2004. Training consists of an interactive PowerPoint presentation that reviews important aspects of the new policy. The second part of the training, Phase IIB, covering policy and procedure for processing Six Month Interim Report Forms (SMIRFs) will be offered during the summer of 2004.

Training for Phase IIA of Reduced Change Reporting Food Stamps was offered in two parts. The first part, a new policy on 12-month certifications and 6-month interim reporting requirements, is the first statewide distance learning initiative offered through the Partner Training Services (PTS) Learning Center.

Income Maintenance programs include:
Food Stamps, Medicaid (including BadgerCare, SeniorCare, and FamilyCare), SSI Caretaker Supplement, and Funeral and Cemetery Aids.

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Some Useful Web Sites:

The Income Maintenance News:
<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/em/imnews/index.htm>

MA Handbook:
http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/em/ma_handbook/

CARES Updates:
http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/em/cares_updates/index.htm

Eligibility Management:
<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/em/index.htm>

DHFS:
<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/>

Policy Notification:
http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/em/policy_notification/signup.htm

